COMPLETE LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (previously presented): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, comprising:

a recording track-setting section that sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a recording ON state and a recording OFF state in response to operation by user;

a mute track-setting section that sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a mute ON state and a mute OFF state, in response to operation by user, the digital audio data being recorded on the tracks set to the recording ON state while the recorded digital audio data being reproduced from the tracks set to the mute OFF state, wherein each track is settable to the recording ON state and the mute OFF state simultaneously;

a reproducible track number-determining section that determines a reproducible number indicating a number of tracks that can be reproduced simultaneously, said reproducible number determined based on the number of tracks set to the recording ON state; and

a reproducing track number-limiting section that limits a number of tracks to be set to the mute OFF state based on said number of reproducible tracks,

wherein said reproducing track-number limiting section automatically changes at least predetermined one of the tracks from the mute OFF state to the mute ON state when said recording track-setting section increases the number of tracks set to the recording ON state and said reproducible number decreases below the number of tracks set to the mute OFF state, said reproducing track number-limiting section inhibits said mute track-setting section from setting more than said reproducible number of tracks to the mute OFF state.

Claims 2 - 8 (cancelled)

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Claim 9 (previously presented): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing method using a multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, the multi-track digital recording/reproducing method comprising:

a recording track-setting step of selectively setting each of a plurality of tracks to one of a recording ON state and a recording OFF state;

a mute track-setting step of selectively setting each of a plurality of tracks to one of a mute ON state and a mute OFF state, the digital audio data being recorded on the tracks set to the recording ON state while the recorded digital audio data being reproduced from the tracks set to the mute OFF state, wherein each track is settable to the recording ON state and the mute OFF state simultaneously;

a reproducible track number-determining step of determining a reproducible number indicating a number of tracks that can be reproduced simultaneously, said reproducible number determined based on a number of tracks set to the recording ON state; and

a reproducing track number-limiting step of limiting a number of tracks to be set to the mute OFF state based on said number of reproducible tracks,

wherein said reproducing track-number limiting section changes at least predetermined one of the tracks from the mute OFF state to the mute ON state when said recording track-setting step increases the number of tracks set to the recording ON state and said reproducible number decreases below the number of tracks set to the mute OFF state, and

wherein said mute track-setting step does not set more than said reproducible number of tracks to the mute OFF state.

Claims 10 – 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (previously presented): A computer-readable medium containing a computer program, the program containing executable instructions for causing a multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus to record and reproduce digital audio data by using multiple tracks, the multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus including a recording track-setting section and a mute track-setting section, the program comprising:

a recording track-setting module that sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a recording ON state and a recording OFF state, in response to a user operation of the recording track-setting section;

a mute track-setting module that sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a mute ON state and a mute OFF state, in response to a user operation of the mute track-setting section, the digital audio data being recorded on the tracks set to the recording ON state while the recorded digital audio data being reproduced from the tracks set to the mute OFF state, wherein each track is settable to the recording ON state and the mute OFF state simultaneously;

a reproducible track number-determining module that determines a reproducible number indicating a number of tracks that can be reproduced simultaneously, said reproducible number determined based on a number of tracks of the plurality of tracks set to the recording ON state; and

a reproducing track number-limiting module that limits a number of tracks to be set to the mute OFF state based on said number of reproducible tracks,

wherein said reproducing track-number limiting module automatically changes at least predetermined one of the tracks from the mute OFF state to the mute ON state when said recording track-setting module increases the number of tracks set to the recording ON state and said

reproducible number decreases below the number of tracks set to the mute OFF state, said reproducing track number-limiting section inhibits said mute track-setting module from setting more than said reproducible number of tracks to the mute OFF state.

Claims 15 - 18 (cancelled)

Claim 19 (previously presented): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a mode designating section that designates an operation mode corresponding to a bit number of the digital audio data to be recorded in the operation mode from among a plurality of operation modes, wherein said reproducible track number-determining section determines the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction based on the designated operation mode and the number of tracks set to the recording ON state.

Claims 20-22 (canceled)